

# **Minutes of the East Greenwich School Committee**

**Tuesday, May 7, 2013**

**Archie R. Cole Middle School Library**

**100 Cedar Avenue**

**East Greenwich, RI 02818**

**6:06p.m. Executive Session, Mr. Green called the meeting to order. Mr. Sommer made a motion to go into executive session for discussion and/or action regarding those items of business exempt from open meetings under General Laws of Rhode Island §42-46-5(a) (1) (2) Teacher Negotiations. Ms. Mark seconded the motion, which passed 6-0.**

**Those in attendance were Mr. David Green, Chair; Dr. Deidre Gifford, Vice-Chair; Mr. Jack Sommer; Mrs. Mary Ellen Winters; Ms. Carolyn Mark; Mr. Clark Smith; and Mrs. Susan Records (arrived at 6:31p.m.). Dr. Victor Mercurio, Superintendent; Mrs. Maryanne Crawford, Director of Administration; and Attorney Matthew Oliverio were also in attendance.**

## **7:03p.m. Regular Meeting**

### **I. Call to Order**

**The meeting was already in session.**

### **II. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag**

**The meeting commenced with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.**

### **III. Public Comments**

**Ms. Kate Goldman, 200 Kenyon Avenue, discussed the unstructured playtime and wellness time at the elementary schools. She explained that recess time is limited and at the discretion of the teacher. She urged the School Committee and the Superintendent to restore the previous time that was allotted. Mr. Green asked Dr. Mercurio to clarify the policy. Dr. Mercurio explained there was no mid-stream change in policy as the School Committee makes district policy. Dr. Mercurio simply reminded the principals' that wellness time needs to be structured time. This does not mean there are constraints or restrictions, only that the time needs to be under the direction and supervision of the teacher.**

### **IV. Approval of Minutes**

#### **a. Regular for April 23, 2013**

**On a motion by Mrs. Winters, which was seconded by Mr. Sommer, the Committee voted 6-0 to approve the regular minutes for April 23, 2013. Mr. Green recused from voting.**

### **V. Superintendent's Report**

**This week is National Teacher Appreciation Week. Dr. Mercurio expressed his thanks to all district teachers. Dr. Mercurio recently attended a meeting at Hexagon Metrology in North Kingstown to discuss a dual immersion program which is in concert with the University of Utah. Superintendents from North Kingstown, South Kingstown, and also Commissioner Gist attended this meeting. Dr. Mercurio explained the program noting that students' are immersed in a foreign language for half of their day and then resume their core**

subjects in English for the balance of the day. This program can begin at the elementary level. A conference call will take place in two weeks (May 29, 2013) which will provide additional details. Dr. Mercurio will report after this meeting. Dr. Mercurio reminded all that the School Committee passed a new transportation policy #2160 last year which states only one seat per bus, per student. The upcoming school year (2013-14) will begin the second phase of the policy. Cross-district transportation will not be provided for daycare. Dr. Mercurio wants to remind the community of this upcoming change. Letters will be sent out to affected parties as the full policy goes into effect September 2013. Some of the local daycares have already taken steps to ensure transportation for their students. Dr. Mercurio announced that East Greenwich High School ranked #2 in GoLocalProv. Narragansett ranked #1, with a per-pupil spending \$4,000 higher than East Greenwich. East Greenwich High School was also included in the top 1000 high schools according to Newsweek ranking #735, which is up from 824 last year. Dr. Mercurio congratulated and thanked all staff members throughout the district.

## **VI. Meadowbrook Construction Schedule Update**

Mr. Sean Sullivan, Strategic Business Solutions, was present to discuss the second phase of the construction at Meadowbrook. Eighty percent of the work was completed last summer. Mr. Sullivan has been in communication with the Meadowbrook principal regarding the upcoming construction and schedule. The inner library core area and the kitchen will be renovated this summer. The

abatement plan was submitted and approved by the Rhode Island Department of Health. A third party will be on site again this summer to monitor asbestos and ensure that controls are in place. There have not been any problems with the building since the first phase of the renovation has been completed. A formal construction schedule will be available in about a month and the school will be turned over for renovation on June 25, 2013.

## **VII. School Committee Concerns**

Ms. Mark thanked Ms. Goldman for her comments and noted there has been confusion surrounding recess and wellness time. She is still hearing from families who are confused.

Ms. Mark expressed her concerns regarding the communication sent from principals' which was inconsistent among the elementary schools. Ms. Mark asked Dr. Mercurio if he can send out a message on the district list serv to clear up any confusion. Ms. Mark also discussed her concern of the lack of minutes for physical activity. She would like to continue to explore ways to maximize physical activity in elementary schools. Mr. Green asked the superintendent to draft correspondence to clear up confusion in regards to recess/wellness time. Dr. Gifford asked if the Committee can see a breakdown of the elementary school day at a future meeting. Dr. Gifford also explained there are constraints as to the number of instructional minutes per day. There are contractual limits and the Committee does not have leeway to add or reduce minutes. Mr. Green noted the Committee would love to have additional minutes added to the school day and will continue to pursue this topic.

## **VIII . Action Items**

**a. Resignation-Maria DiGiovanni-Hanaford**

**b. Resignation-Elaine Moscardi-East Greenwich High School**

**On a motion by Mrs. Winters, which was seconded by Dr. Gifford, the Committee voted 7-0 to accept the resignations.**

**c. Approval of Health and Wellness Subcommittee Charge**

**Mr. Green explained the Committee had a previous discussion regarding changing the title of the subcommittee and revising the charge to be more encompassing. On a motion by Mrs. Winters, which was seconded by Ms. Mark, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve the Health and Wellness Charge.**

**d. Approval of new position FY2014- 1:1  
Paraprofessional-Frenchtown**

**Dr. Mercurio explained the need for this new position. The student currently receives services from an outside vendor which can be provided at district-level at a lower cost. On a motion by Mrs. Winters, which was seconded by Mrs. Records, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve the new position for the FY2014 school year.**

## **IX. Policy**

**a. First Read #2190 Extracurricular Fundraising and Commercial Activities**

**Dr. Gifford summarized the revisions to the policy. This policy was circulated to the PTG presidents within the last year. Several parents in the audience (Cheryl Osborne, Kate Goldman)**

**discussed their concerns regarding the revision surrounding fundraising and concerns regarding timetable for approval. Ms. Mark**

asked the parents' to contact the Committee ahead of the second draft/adoption with their comments or suggested revisions. Dr. Mercurio will discuss this draft with the PTG presidents at the May 13th meeting. The Committee explained that the policy is not meant to squash efforts, but to coordinate efforts and purchases in conjunction with the district. Ms. Goldman asked about the possibility of providing an on-line form for fundraising approval which will go to the School Committee. Members of the audience also discussed ongoing fundraising programs with local stores (Stop & Shop, Dave's, Target).

#### **X. Subcommittee Reports**

##### **a. Policy Committee**

Dr. Gifford noted the Policy Committee has meetings scheduled for the rest of the school year. The next meeting on May 17th will include discussion on the Mental Health policy.

##### **b. Building Committee**

Mr. Sommer discussed the meeting that took place late this afternoon surrounding energy savings and lighting. A potential program with National Grid is being explored. RIDE reimbursement will also be explored. The committee is also working on updating the Capital Improvement Plan.

#### **XI. Discussion**

##### **a. Calendar Survey Results for 2014-2015**

Dr. Mercurio provided the results of the questions in the calendar survey. The results included

responses from parents and staff. No interpretation of the results

was offered at this time. There were about two-hundred comments submitted which would require a qualitative analysis. The next steps in the process are to contact the various parties that would be affected by a change in the calendar (i.e. RIDE, R.I. Interscholastic League, Aramark, Ocean State, etc.). The results of this survey may be reviewed again this summer. Mr. Green reminded all that this survey is for the 2014-2015 school year. Dr. Mercurio offered to circulate the results of the survey to the R.I. Association of Superintendents. Ms. Mark asked if the results from parents and staff can be separated and comments grouped by topic. Ms. Bridget Hayes discussed the ramifications of school breaks in relation to instruction periods.

**b. Curriculum-Transition to the Common Core**

Dr. Mercurio provided a PowerPoint which summarized the transition to the common core. This PowerPoint will be added to the district website. There are various phone apps available with information on the common core. The district is in the process of uploading curriculum to the state IMS system. There was also discussion regarding NEWA and the possibility of pursuing a new application.

**c. Mandarin after-school program at EGHS**

Dr. Mercurio and Mrs. Perrett visited URI to secure a teacher for the after-school Mandarin program. The full-year program will take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays at the high school with the time to be determined. URI is sending staff to meet with the high school language department this week. Mrs. Perrett will create a flyer that will be sent out on the list serv for parents of grade eight and EGHS

students. URI is providing the teacher at no cost to the district. The on-line course is offered by Middlebury College and costs \$178 per student. Dr. Mercurio will report back at the June 18, 2013 School Committee meeting.

**d. Letter in support of Commissioner Gist**

This item was tabled.

**e. Strategic Planning Process**

Dr. Mercurio and Mr. Green reached out to two community members who offered their services to facilitate strategic planning. Dr. Mercurio recommends Mr. Richard Diamond. Mr. Diamond's resume was provided. His experience includes strategic planning at the federal government level and also with Bristol-Warren School District. Teachers, administrators, and two students; one at Cole and one at EGHS will be solicited to serve on the committee. Dr. Gifford noted there should be Town Council involvement in this process. Community participation will also be solicited via the district list serve. It is unclear how the community members will be chosen. Meetings will take place at 5:30-6:00p.m. The district is looking to use NEIT as the venue. The Committee would like Mr. Diamond's input on the appropriate representation.

Mr. Green thanked members of the audience for their active participation.

**XII. Adjournment**

On a motion by Mr. Sommer, which was seconded by Mrs. Winters, the Committee voted

7-0 to adjourn at 9:04p.m.



**CHRISTINE DIMEGLIO**  
**SECRETARY**